BLACK CAT

AH!

HOT

MARVEL

8

WILSON
MELNIKOV
REBER

RATED T+

THE NEGATIVE ZONE.

HROOAAH!

BAD DAYS HAVE A WAY OF *SNEAKING UP* ON YOU.

YOU THINK YOU'RE JUST GOING TO MAKE A *QUICK* SIDE TRIP INTO THE *NEGATIVE ZONE* TO HELP A FRIEND STEAL A CRINGEY AUDITION TAPE FROM A MAXIMUM-SECURITY *STORAGE FACILITY...*

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'RE OPEN TO *NEGOTIATION?*

...BUT YOU END UP IN THE CLUTCHES OF SOME *ROCK MONSTER,* WITH ALL THE *BLOOD* RUSHING TO YOUR HEAD, FACING ALMOST CERTAIN *DEATH.*

FELICIA!

RUN, MJ! BEFORE IT GETS YOU TOO!

...AND LET *YOU* STEAL ALL THE GLORY WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY LOOKING LIKE A *BETTER PERSON?*

I DON'T THINK SO.

THAT'S WHY YOU GOTTA STRONG-ARM YOUR ***FRIENDS*** INTO COMING ***WITH*** YOU ON YOUR ZANY ADVENTURES.

BECAUSE THEN, AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT ***ALONE.***

AND IF THEY ***JUST HAPPEN*** TO BE HOST BODIES FOR AN ALIEN ***SYMBIOTE*** WITH SUPER-STRENGTH AND A COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR ITS OWN ***SAFETY?***

SO MUCH THE BETTER.

FELICIA HARDY is the **BLACK CAT**, the world's slyest and most skilled super-thief! Armed with her luck-altering abilities, there's no heist she can't pull off. The longer the odds, the better!

BLACK CAT

VIII. FORTRESS OF MAGNITUDE

The BLACK CAT recently tried to change her stripes to become a super hero…and incurred the wrath of Spider-Man's rogues' gallery (and pretty much everyone else in New York City). She was about to turn her luck around when VENOM paid her a visit. Once Felicia's shock at learning that the symbiote was bonded to MARY JANE WATSON wore off…she agreed to aid them—by stealing something of incredible value from a supernatural vault deep in the Negative Zone!

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SLAM!

HRRAAAH!

HEY!

OOF!

GREAT. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ***DRY-CLEAN*** THIS NOW.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW COMPLICATED IT IS TO GET ***DUST*** OUT OF FAUX FUR?

STOP FIGHTING-- YOU BLOCK OF-- CHALK--

...NEVER MIND, DON'T ANSWER THAT.

YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, BIG GUY.

THE ONLY ***ROCKS*** I LIKE ARE ***DIAMONDS.***

FWING

FWING

GGH--
WHY ARE-- HUMAN BRAINS-- SO IMPORTANT-- YET SO SQUISHY--?
SPACK
SPACK
SPACK
!
!
IT'S NOT *PERSONAL*, BIG GUY.
BUT *NOBODY* IS ALLOWED TO MESS WITH *MY* FRIENDS--
CRACK!
GAAAH!

POP!

YIKES!

THUMP!

SNIFF!

THAT WAS JUST *RIDICULOUS.*

I *HATE* THE NEGATIVE ZONE. NOTHING BUT LOW ATMOSPHERE AND *TALKING BLOCKS.*

HEY! HOW ABOUT "THANKS FOR SAVING MY LIFE"?!

HOW ABOUT THANKS FOR SAVING *YOUR* LIFE, BLONDIE?

IF YOU HAD SOME *SITUATIONAL AWARENESS,* WE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO JUMP IN THERE LIKE THAT.

I'M NOT SURE I *LIKE* YOUR LITTLE *PARASITE* FRIEND, MARY JANE.

YOU'D THINK BEING FORCED TO RELY ON OTHER LIFE-FORMS FOR *SURVIVAL* WOULD TEACH IT SOME *SOCIAL GRACES.*

I KNOW, I KNOW.

AND IT'S A *SYMBIOTE,* NOT A PARASITE...

BUT THE TRUTH IS--*NEITHER* OF US SHOULD BE OUT HERE, RISKING OUR NECKS FOR A STUPID *VIDEOTAPE.*

WE'RE ALL SO AFRAID OF BEING *JUDGED* THAT WE THINK OUR *REPUTATIONS* ARE WORTH MORE THAN OUR *LIVES.*

AND *NOW* LOOK!

WE'RE WANDERING AROUND SOME KIND OF *CRYSTAL WASTELAND* WITHOUT HALF A CLUE WHERE WE'RE *GOING!*

C'MON, MJ. IT'S NOT *THAT* BAD. IT'S *NEVER* THAT BAD.

THE *NEGATIVE ZONE* HAS A WAY OF DUMPING YOU OUT WHERE YOU NEED TO BE.

PLUS, YOU'VE GOT *ME.* A WALKING, TALKING GOOD-LUCK CHARM.

YOU'RE A ***BAD-LUCK*** CHARM, FELICIA.

I CONSIDER THAT A VERY ***SHORTSIGHTED*** WAY OF LOOKING AT WHAT I DO, THANKS.

LUCK ISN'T A GLASS HALF-EMPTY, GLASS HALF-FULL TYPE OF SCENARIO.

IT'S RECOGNIZING THAT THE GLASS IS A HUNDRED PERCENT ***FULL***--FIFTY PERCENT WATER, FIFTY PERCENT ***AIR.***

LUCK IS MAKING ***BOTH*** HALVES WORK IN YOUR FAVOR--

WILL YOU SHUT UP?! I'M GONNA ***FALL!***

DOOF!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE INTERRUPTED ME. I WAS ON A ***ROLL.***

WELL, NEXT TIME YOU FEEL A ***PHILOSOPHY LECTURE*** COMING ON, WAIT TILL WE'RE NOT CAREENING DOWN A SAND DUNE IN ANOTHER ***DIMENSION***, OKAY?

IT'S ***DISTRACTING.***

WHAT'S DISTRACTING IS WATCHING YOUR ***FRIEND*** TURN INTO SHINY BLACK GOOP AND--

HEY!

THINK *THAT* MIGHT BE THE SPOT WE'RE LOOKING FOR?

DUNNO.

IT'S NOT AS *ROMANTIC* AS WHAT I WAS PICTURING.

TRUE.

BUT IF I WANTED TO HIDE SOMETHING *PRECIOUS* IN A PLACE *NOBODY* WOULD BE ABLE TO GET TO--

--*THAT'S* WHERE I'D PUT IT.

U-STORE-IT

OKAY. WE'RE IN BUSINESS. LET *ME* TAKE CARE OF THE *BREAKING*- IN PART.

YOU WORRY ABOUT FINDING THAT *TAPE* ONCE WE'RE INSIDE.

AND DON'T BE *INTIMIDATED* BY COMPLICATED-LOOKING *LOCKS*. I HAVE A VERY SPECIALIZED SET OF *SKILLS* FOR THAT.

I'VE NEVER MET A LOCK I COULDN'T *PICK*.

IT'S NOT THE LOCKS I'M *WORRIED* ABOUT!

HEY! SLOW DOWN!

HOW DO WE GET PAST A *LAVA* MOAT AND A WALL OF CUT-GLASS *SPIKES?* OR DO YOU HAVE A *SPECIALIZED SET OF SKILLS* FOR THAT TOO?

NOPE, *THAT* PART IS A JOB FOR YOU AND YOUR GOOPY FRIEND.

BUT THE SYMBIOTE HAS A WEAKNESS TO *FIRE!* AND THOSE SPIKES WILL CUT THROUGH *WEBBING!*

IS THERE SOME SORT OF *PLAN B?*

NOT UNLESS *YOU'VE* THOUGHT OF ONE.

KRRRRRRRRRR

KRRRRRRR

WHOA.

WHAT... IS IT?

IT'S A *SPHINX.* A GUARDIAN SPIRIT.

HOW DO YOU KNOW *THAT?*

I MINORED IN *CLASSICAL LITERATURE.*

LISTEN, WE'RE IN A *HURRY.*

CAN WE JUST *SKIP* THIS STEP AND MOSEY ON PAST THIS WALL WHILE YOU LOOK THE OTHER WAY?

I'M SORRY, BABE. I CAN'T DO THAT.

WELCOME TO *U-STORE-IT,* THE NEGATIVE ZONE'S PREMIER, ULTRA-SECURE *STORAGE* FACILITY. RATED FIVE STARS ON MOOGLE AND YORP.

FOR ACCESS, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING *RIDDLE:*

WHAT CANNOT BE SEEN BUT ALWAYS FELT, HAS NO FORM BUT BINDS PEOPLE TOGETHER, AND HAS NO PRICE YET KEEPS IT VALUE?

I'LL HANDLE THIS.

MS.-- *uh*--SPHINX LADY?

I'M PRETTY SURE I HAVE THE ***ANSWER.***

AND THE ANSWER...

...IS ***FRIENDSHIP.***

INCORRECT.

THE ANSWER WAS *FIAT CURRENCY.*

SHOOM!

FRIENDSHIP?!

IT SOUNDED *PLAUSIBLE!*

THIS IS THE *NEGATIVE ZONE,* YOU DWEEB, NOT A *ROM-COM--*

SHOOM!

GAAH!

SHOOM!

COME ON! WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF THE *BLAST RADIUS!*

SHOOM!

WE *HAVE* TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO GET PAST THE MOAT AND OVER THE *WALL!* IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!

BUT HOW?!

SHOOM!

I DON'T KNOW! GROW GIANT *FROG LEGS* AND JUMP OVER OR SOMETHING!

DO I *HAVE* TO?!

SHOOM!

...APPARENTLY, THE ANSWER IS *YES.*

HOLD ON.

WHAT THE--?!

HEY! PUT ME DOWN!

THIS WAS *YOUR* IDEA, BLONDIE.

WHOOOAA!

SHOOM!

WHOOSH!

THUD!

...LET'S *NEVER* DO THAT AGAIN.

LISTEN. YOU WANTED A WAY IN. AND WE'RE *IN.*

CAN'T SAY I'M A FAN OF THE *DECORATING* SCHEME. VERY... DESOLATE WILDERNESS.

DO YOU EVER GET *TIRED* OF BEING SO *MATERIALISTIC?*

NOPE, NEVER.

SHEESH. THEY BUILT THIS PLACE LIKE *FORT KNOX* ON STEROIDS.

THESE WALLS HAVE GOT TO BE THREE FEET THICK, AND ANY *LOCKING* MECHANISMS ARE LIKELY TO BE EXTREMELY *COMPLEX* PIECES OF--

KA-CHUNK!

CREEEAAK!

SORRY. I KNOW YOU WERE EXCITED TO USE YOUR EXTREMELY SPECIFIC *SKILLS.*

HOW... DID YOU DO THAT?

WELL, I HAD TO MAKE ***SOME*** KIND OF CONTRIBUTION TO THE WHOLE ***BREAKING-IN*** PROJECT AFTER SCREWING UP THE SPHINX'S RIDDLE...

...SO I TRIED 1-2-3-4-5 ON THE COMBINATION LOCK.

THAT...FEELS LIKE A PRETTY ***SERIOUS*** SECURITY FLAW.

PEOPLE GET ***COMPLACENT*** ABOUT THIS KIND OF THING. THEY THINK THE ***FANCIER*** LAYERS OF SECURITY WILL ***SAVE*** THEM.

OOPS. ARE WE NOT ***SUPPOSED*** TO DO THAT?

THINK OF HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL USING THEIR ***BIRTHDAY*** AS THEIR ***BANK PIN.***

FELICIA! ARE YOU ***SERIOUS?!***

WHEN WE GET HOME, YOU HAVE TO ***CHANGE*** IT RIGHT AWAY!

"WHEN WE GET HOME"?

ARE YOU SURE WE'RE *EVER* GOING HOME?

THIS IS *MASSIVE!*

HOW ARE WE *EVER* GOING TO FIND MY *VIDEO-TAPE* IN ALL OF THIS?!

I DUNNO. BUT I'M PREPARED TO HAVE FUN *FINDING OUT.*

XAVIER INSTITUTE STORAGE

OOOH--

COME *ON!* WE CAN'T AFFORD TO GET *DISTRACTED!*

BUT--

DON'T YOU HAVE *ENOUGH* JEWELRY? HAVEN'T YOU KNOCKED OVER *EVERY* BOUTIQUE ON FIFTH AVENUE?

...YEAH.

BUT *THIS* IS JEWELRY FROM THE *NEGATIVE ZONE.*

YOU'RE *INFURIATING!*

OKAY, OKAY.

WE NEED A *SYSTEM*. OTHERWISE, WE REALLY *WILL* BE HERE FOREVER.

I THINK WE SHOULD START AT THE TOP AND WORK OUR WAY *DOWN*. FLOOR BY FLOOR.

WE CAN'T *POSSIBLY* GO THROUGH *EVERY* BOX IN EVERY VAULT THOUGH.

I MEAN, *LOOK* AT ALL THE STUFF JUST *PILED* OUT HERE IN THE MAIN ROOM. NOW IMAGINE HALF A DOZEN FLOORS OF THE *SAME* THING.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO SEARCH *EVERY* BOX, MJ. WE'RE GOING TO USE THE PROCESS OF *ELIMINATION*.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE *KNOW* YOUR TAPE ISN'T GOING TO BE IN SOME DUSTY OLD *STORAGE* CONTAINER FROM THE *XAVIER INSTI--*

...

WHAT? WHAT IS IT?

I'D ONLY EVER HEARD STORIES. *LEGENDS*.

I THINK... I THINK IT'S THE *SIEGE PERILOUS*.

RUMORS ON UNDERGROUND FORUMS ABOUT THE MOST ***VALUABLE*** ARTIFACTS A ***THIEF*** COULD POSSIBLY ACQUIRE.

AND NOW...IT WAS IN *MY* HANDS.

FELICIA? I THINK YOU SHOULD PUT THAT *DOWN*--

SO... BEAUTIFUL...

NO THIEF COULD POSSIBLY WALK AWAY FROM SUCH A *PRIZE.*

HUH?!

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

NO MATTER WHAT IT MIGHT *COST* THEM.

IT'S SO *BRIGHT!*

FELICIA! WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE?!*

NEXT: STRING THEORY.

SPIDERS & SYMBIOTES

THE LOWE-DOWN

WATCH OUT, WEB-HEADS!

DEATH SPIRAL is in full terrifying swing this month and next! March and April issues of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN and VENOM are fully devoted to this story, and both books are jam-packed with twists, turns, surprises, revelations, and TORMENT! Who is Torment, you ask? Torment is the name of the scariest serial killer in the Marvel Universe—at least since Eddie Brock stopped Carnage from killing to his red-symbiote heart's content. Once Carnage learned of Torment, Carnage knocked down the first domino in the elaborate domino setup that is DEATH SPIRAL. Spider-Man and Venom aren't safe, and neither are ANY OF THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS. Elderly aunts are in more danger than usual until the end of April! DEATH SPIRAL's stakes are high and so is the tension, so take your heart medication (if you take such meds, and if not, check with your doctor if you SHOULD get some) and strap in!

Keep Thwippin',
Nick Lowe
Spider-Editor

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN/VENOM
DEATH SPIRAL

THMP-LIST

- ❑ ALL-NEW SPIDER-GWEN: THE GHOST-SPIDER #8
- ❑ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #23
- ❑ BLACK CAT #8
- ❑ HULK: SMASH EVERYTHING #4
- ❑ PLANET OF THE APES VS. FANTASTIC FOUR #2
- ❑ VENOM #255

- ❑ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #24

- ❑ INFERNAL HULK #5
- ❑ PLANET SHE-HULK #5
- ❑ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #25
- ❑ DUNGEONS OF DOOM #3
- ❑ KNULL #3
- ❑ PREDATOR: BLOODSHED #2

THIS MONTH'S HOST

Currently working in the VENOM-VERSE, along with STAR WARS and DAREDEVIL.

WHO IS YOUR IRL SUPER HERO?

Call me sentimental, but I'd say it's everyday people who stand up to do the right thing even when it's tough. We're seeing a lot of that these days—bring it on.

WHICH SPIDER-MAN VILLAIN DO YOU MOST RESONATE WITH?

Kingpin! The guy's a hard worker, never quits, and always gets results. My spirit animal!

IF YOU COULD GIVE YOUR YOUNGER SELF ONE PIECE OF ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Shave your head, work out until you have a physique like a Sherman tank, and buy a bunch of white suits.

NAME: Charles Soule

TITLE: Writer! Dreamweaver! Story Sculptor!

WORKS ON:
How much time do you have?

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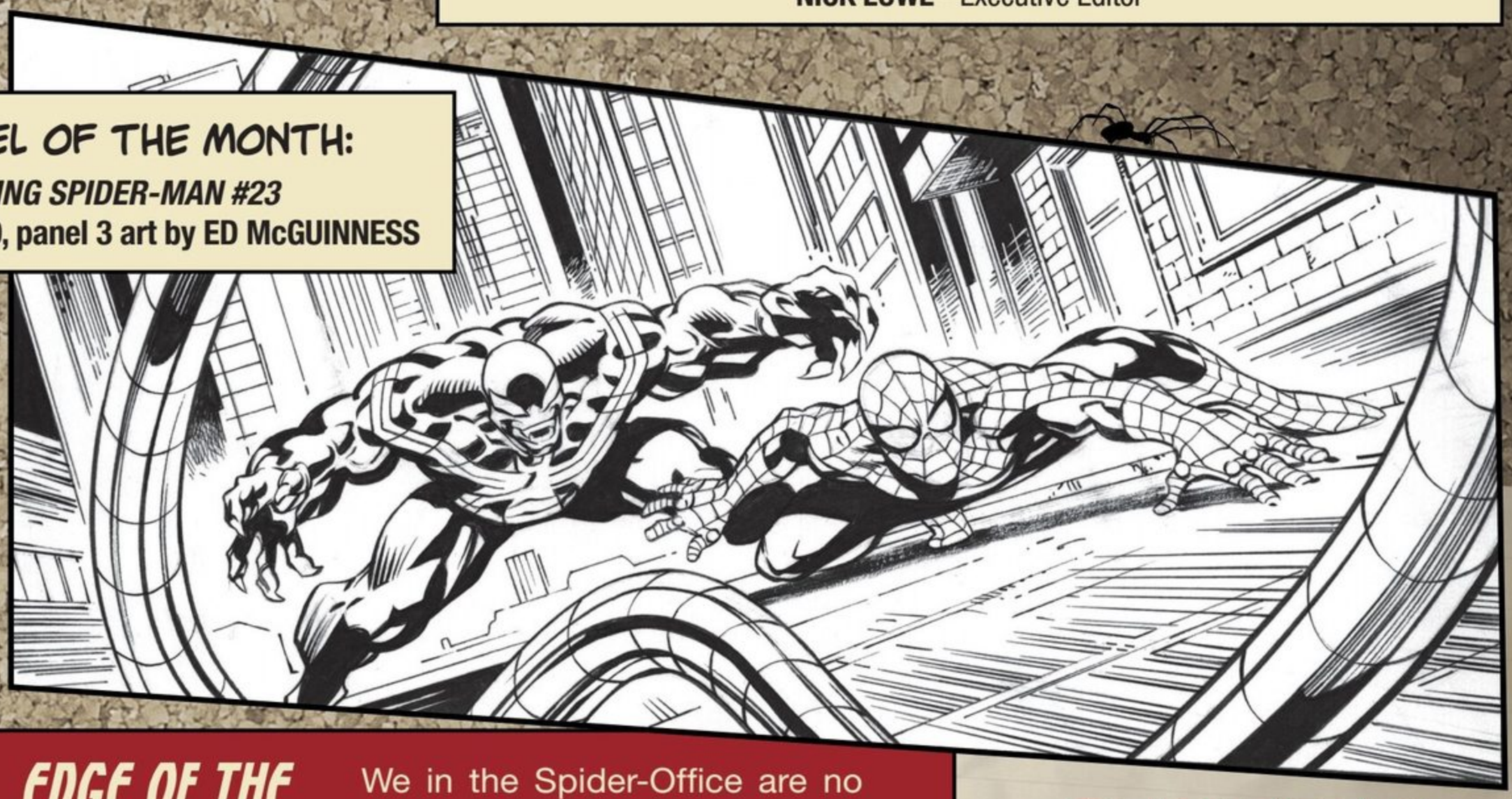
PANEL OF THE MONTH:

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #23
page 9, panel 3 art by ED McGUINNESS



EDGE OF THE VARIANT-VERSE

We in the Spider-Office are no stranger to variants—we've got a Spider-Verse full of 'em. It's hard to narrow it down, but check out our favorite variant covers of the month.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN/VENOM: DEATH SPIRAL
Connecting Variant Covers by IBAN COELLO

GAMMA CORNER

HULK VERSUS THE ONE ABOVE ALL

"Surely you can't mean—"

We do.

The Infernal Hulk, the baddest Hulk there's ever been, takes on the ultimate creator. Who will win? Well, we've got another Hulk issue coming out next month, so...place your bets.

INFERNAL HULK #5
On sale 3/18

NEXT

#9

ON SALE:
4/8/26